

## Wrestling with our Angels: Inner and Outer Democracy in America Under the Shadow of Donald Trump

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*“The World hangs on a thin thread. And that thread is the psyche of man.....We are the great danger now....psyche is the great danger.... ”*

*(C. G. Jung, BBC Interview, Face to Face, 1959)*

### Angelic Powers and the ‘System’

For fifty years now, as a practicing psychoanalyst, I have been studying what Jung called the ‘thin thread’ by which the world hangs--the human psyche—and trying to understand how the psyche itself constitutes the ‘great danger’ that Jung describes. This study has involved me in the exploration of mysterious and invisible ‘powers’ resident in the dark recesses of the human personality—elemental emotional powers of *primitive hate and primitive love*—that Freud and Jung located in the ‘unconscious’ realm of the mind. These archetypal powers, sometimes appearing in our dreams as ‘angels’ or ‘demons,’ represent “primitive” forces from deep within the psyche/soma. They are mostly invisible—just like the fundamental particles of physics that comprise all material reality (quarks, neutrinos, bosons etc.). They can only be “seen” as they manifest in the ‘detectors’ offered by human life—both inner symbolic detectors and outer behavioral ones. In personal psychology, we see them in the powerful binary emotions that get aroused when personal ‘complexes’ are activated, or in the terrifying or exciting dramas of our dreams. In the outer collective we find them in what Tom Singer<sup>1</sup> has described as our “cultural complexes” where normal human emotions are amplified by the group psyche and lead to extreme behavior in the culture--from the horrors of the holocaust to the election of Donald Trump.

I have discovered these elemental powers (‘angels’) in my work with a particular sub-group of patients—namely those who have suffered from catastrophic early childhood trauma. The inner world of such patients is riven by fear, and constructed around a ‘system’ of dissociative defenses that employ the ‘powers’ to help regulate an otherwise emotionally dysregulated psyche and to protect an exquisite vulnerability at the core of the traumatized self. The result is a very controlling ‘totalitarian’--even ‘fascistic’--defensive structure made up of archetypal powers that take over the inner ‘government’ of the personality where a healthy democratic ego should be. This system (described in my earlier writing as the “Self-Care System,”--see Kalsched, 1996, 2013) is full of *violence and illusion*, built around a core of *vulnerability and innocence*, that is obsessively protected by tyrannical control. It is a fortress psychology designed (through dissociation) to keep things ‘out,’ as contrasted to a democratic psychology which is permeable and tends towards inclusivity. When a dissociative psychology takes control, the daunting complexities of the real world are simplified and reduced to polarized opposites driven by extreme emotions and primitive defenses. A fear-driven,

victim/perpetrator narrative takes over and according to the implicit assumptions of this narrative, painful negative feelings and “bad” influences from outside are always threatening to intrude, corrupt, or humiliate the “goodness” and “innocence” inside the self.

In America today this polarizing ‘us-them’ narrative has taken over much of our common culture. We see it on both the left and the right of the political spectrum. It is more prominent on the right—for example the alt-right’s conviction that our essential American innocence and “goodness” is threatened at our borders (immigrants!), or by government regulation (the “deep state”) or by cynical negative reporting by the media (fake news!) or by a secretive power elite with globalist agenda which is conspiring to take away our guns! But it is present on the political left as well—in the apocalyptic sky-is-falling hysteria and scandal-mongering obsessions that are conspicuous in some liberal news outlets, or in the equally bizarre ‘sensitivities’ to trauma on some of our ‘liberal’ college campuses where trigger warnings are required for upsetting content and “safe zones” are needed for the protection of student-psyches too tender to bear the impact of ‘dangerous’ negative material. A recent survey revealed that a majority of college students think it is acceptable to shout down a speaker with whom they disagree, and 20 percent think violence is warranted in such a situation.<sup>2</sup> When the German philosopher and psychologist Theodore Adorno<sup>3</sup> developed his “Fascism scale” in 1950, and administered it to a large post-war population, he discovered that authoritarianism and dogmatism were features of a fear-driven psychology found *on both the left and the right*.

Whether on the left or right, the particular dissociative psychology I am describing thrives in times of great existential anxiety or instability, such as we live in today. It imposes order on a fearful chaos and thus creates safety and promotes survival, but at a great cost—the individual’s solid relationship to reality. It is organized around *extremes* of every kind—extreme emotions, extreme opinions, extreme interpretations of history; polarized positions on every issue, and a reversion to all-or-none, totalistic thinking. These extremes permit the discharge of angry emotions and are designed to defend against the painful, vulnerable feelings resulting from a trauma history and to give the dysregulated psyche coherence. Relying on powerful defenses (angels), such a psychology has an apocalyptic and absolutist mindset and nurtures wild conspiratorial fears. Often it has a megalomaniacal view of oneself and one’s “tribe” as special or elect. It is dogmatic, intolerant of ambiguity, and mistrusts ‘otherness.’ It thrives on suspicion of others, attributes ill will to one’s opponent, and sees enemies and traitors everywhere. It represents what Theodore Adorno described as the “authoritarian personality, or what Richard Hofstadter called “the paranoid style” in American politics, or what Christopher Bollas calls the “fascistic state of mind.”<sup>4</sup>

As a mental structure, this autocratic dissociative psychology exists in everyone, and lives side by side with its healthier democratic twin. In psychoanalytic theory, we know inner democracy as a *conflict psychology* and it is something towards which we, who practice psychotherapy, are continually striving—both in ourselves and our patients. The psyche exists in parts and these parts must be integrated if the organism is to function as a ‘whole.’ Speaking personally, I am always trying to help my patients transform a

dissociative psychology into a conflict psychology.<sup>5</sup> Hence I am working for inner tolerance and for a democracy of the psyche, with all parts of the self allowed to exist in a central “governance” that we call the ego. This means wrestling with the absolutist powers—the ‘angels’ of the dissociative system—in order to transform them—just like the Biblical Jacob did at the river Jabbok in the Old Testament (Genesis 32:22-32).

In psychotherapy, this process means wrestling with extreme emotions and absolutist attitudes, thereby slowly developing emotional literacy, so that conflicting emotions and attitudes can be entertained at the same time without splitting. By holding conflict inwardly, and humanizing the archetypal forces of the psyche, we struggle daily to make a “3<sup>rd</sup>” space between the curse and blessing of the polarized and polarizing tendencies of the Self-Care System (SCS). In this ‘third’ space, diversity, plurality and inclusiveness are welcomed. Even the most vulnerable and disaffected parts of ourselves get represented in a central ‘government’ of the ego (e-pluribus unum). This requires a certain kind of resilient consciousness that can only develop in emotionally safe and educationally informed environments—a consciousness that permits and encourages differences and opens to vulnerable, human feelings.

The autocratic angels of the dissociative ‘system’ do not like democracy. They do not like to be dragged down from their extreme positions, onto the human plane of the embodied ego where painful feelings and inner conflicts are experienced. Because they were born in trauma, it is difficult for them to bear the pain of such humiliating “co-presence”—so they must split and project and expel from consciousness those contents that are too “conflictual”. That’s what dissociation ‘does.’ It creates a tyranny of ‘divine’ structures (angels) which assert their power over their limited ‘human’ subjects. So the work of creating a conflict psychology and a true democracy of the psyche is a continual work of ‘incarnation’. It involves coaxing or inviting or bribing the angels to give up some of their celestial power, forcing them down to ‘middle earth’ where they must take on more embodied, modulated, and vulnerable human qualities. In the psychotherapy relationship this can be a very stormy process, but it is the only way to wholeness.

In the pages that follow I will try to articulate and describe how these two psychologies—a democratic psychology on the one hand and a dissociative psychology on the other, are in a struggle for our national psyche—with a dissociative psychology lately getting the upper hand. In order to recognize the effects of a dissociative psychology on our personal and collective life we must learn to identify the archetypal ‘powers’ that take over in a traumatized life or culture. *The fact that these angelic ‘powers’ are invisible—i.e., unconscious -- inclines us to underestimate them.* In America, many commentators on the current cultural scene have acknowledged the growing destructive polarization and incivility in American political life, attributing these trends to socio-political, technological, or economic factors such as lack of jobs, income inequality, lack of health care, etc. Very few speak of the underlying psychological factors. Yet if Jung is right and the “psyche is the great danger now” then we must look deeper than the usual ‘outer’ explanations. So, we must ask, what are these underlying ‘powers’ or ‘angels’? Why are their destructive energies on the rampage in our troubled times? And how might a better understanding of how they operate in the *individual* psyche help us understand how they

operate collectively, and therefore what we might do in our common life, to lessen their impact—or maybe even transform them.

### **Archetypal Affects and our Angels**

Readers of this book will know that C. G. Jung was dissatisfied with Freud's model of the 'personal unconscious' and felt obliged to add a deeper 'impersonal' and 'mythic' layer underneath it that he called by various names--the 'collective unconscious,' the 'ground plan,' the 'original mind,' the 'hereditary psyche' or the 'objective psyche.' Moreover, for Jung there was an *implicate order* to this ground plan....it wasn't just a seething cauldron as Freud called the ID. This implicate order, according to Jung, was structured in *affect-images* that are archetypal in nature, and tend to be personified as daimonic beings—devils or angels, and other preternatural presences and powers. Moreover, each archetype has an emotional side resident in the body, and an image side, resident in the mind.

On the one hand, archetypal affects form the emotional basis of the personality and according to Lew Stewart<sup>6</sup> there are 7 such affects, ranging along a spectrum from positive (Interest/curiosity, Joy, Surprise) to negative (Fear, Sadness, Anger, and Shame/Contempt). These powerful affects are experienced by the immature ego as overwhelming, titanic, angelic, and they always occur in antinomies—extremes, totalistic or binary categories. They arrive in the child's psyche like 880 volts of electricity from the "power grid" which is analogous to the primitive brain stem of the nervous system. The voltage is overwhelming and unusable (it will blow the circuits) until it is transformed—from 880 to 440 to 220 to 110 where it becomes usable electricity. A child overcome by hate is channeling its dark angel—completely possessed by rage. A child in "love" is equally possessed by a blissful 'bright angel' and unable to tolerate the love-threatening limits of 'reality.' In both cases, archetypal affects will have to be transformed into feelings. In the electrical grid, such transformation occurs in a device called a "transformer" which sits on the telephone pole outside our houses. In child development the transformational containers will be relationships within the family, and then later, as the child enters the wider world, in friendships and sometimes even in the psychoanalytic transference relationship.

In the course of human development the powerful ambivalent affects from the body accrue images from the mind, and they too are binary. They appear as personified "great beings," *angels and demons* with super-human powers. There's the great good mother and the great bad mother, the malevolent monster-demon and the benevolent guardian angel, Christ and the Anti-Christ etc. These images represent spiritual extremes—mythological absolutes—opposites—totally one thing or the other. Such powerful images represent the spiritual and emotional "fundamentals" of the primitive psyche (light and dark). They live "underneath" (in the somatic unconscious) or "above" (in the celestial unconscious of the mind), separated from the kingdom of "middle earth" where we live and the personal ego develops.

If we want to grow up to be mature, emotionally literate adults, we will have to learn to “tame” and “harness” the extreme powers of the archetypal psyche—to humanize them. If we are successful at this, we will end up with a secure sense of self, a flexible and a resilient ego-identity, made up of diverse emotional parts of the self, represented in a democracy of the psyche. We will have actualized our own personal vision of wholeness. If we are unsuccessful, we will find ourselves living amidst autocratic and tyrannical emotional ‘forces’ that will alternately ‘inflate’ and ‘deflate’ us, leaving us compartmentalized, emotionally unstable, lacking in secure self-esteem, full of unconscious fear and shame, and surrounded by raw, unprocessed, emotions and rigid defenses.

### **The Traumatic Origins of the Powers**

Extraordinary injuries to the psyche give birth to extraordinary defenses. Most “normal” defenses such as suppression, repression, or denial, help us to manage painful experiences within what trauma psychologists call a “window of tolerance.” But when unbearably painful injuries occur, we are suddenly “off the charts” of bearable pain or conflict and the psyche calls in its ‘heavy artillery’—i.e., angels. Angels dissociate the psyche.

Let’s imagine a small girl who is being sexually violated by a beloved and idealized parent. This child is suddenly flooded by overwhelming and unbearable emotion. Love is suddenly mixed with pain and horror, shame and anxiety. Hatred toward the needed object may flood the child with impossible conflict. At this point something remarkable happens. Suddenly the child is ‘on the ceiling’ in a corner of the room, looking down at its little body being abused—understanding everything and feeling nothing. We call this attack on the integrity of experience, *dissociation* which means to split or separate. Dissociation is a severe and powerful defense that resolves the unbearable conflict within the child’s feelings by dis-connecting it from the pain of these feelings and ‘leaving’ the scene altogether through a mental trick. This trick involves an ‘escape when there is no escape.’<sup>7</sup> The child is no longer screaming and crying but strangely numb, compliant, frozen and “gone.” It may even cooperate with its own abuse. And after the traumatic moment is over, the child will “forget” that the abuse ever happened. Not only the feelings, but the actual memory of the experience will often be forgotten, dissociated—fogged out in a kind of trauma-trance. Life goes on “as if” the event never happened. Later it may return as a “flashback,” as frequently occurs in PTSD.

This defense (dissociation) is adaptive for the moment because it allows life to go on with vulnerable parts of the person’s experience sequestered in an inner sanctum and separated from consciousness. The psyche is Balkanized and conflict among the parts is walled off. But there is a price to be paid for this “security.” ‘Angels’ are put in charge of self-regulation instead of the ego. Angels are extremely powerful defenses. They can cast spells. They can catapult a child out of her body. They can throw an invisibility cloak over a painful memory so that it is “forgotten.” They can “kill” consciousness of an event and make the child numb to its feelings. Psychoanalysts call these defenses “primitive.” Primitive defenses create ‘systems’ of protection also known as “pathological structures”

and trauma survivors live inside such pathological structures. I believe that in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in America, we are all trauma survivors and find ourselves inside such a pathological structure. Here is an image of such a ‘structure.’

### **The Self-Care-System and its Tyranny**

The accompanying illustration of William Blake is called “The Good and Evil Angels Struggling for Possession of a Child.” It’s a good image for various parts of the divided self that make up what I call the Self-Care System.



On the left is the Dark Angel, represented as Satan or the Devil, shackled to the flames of Hell, eyes glazed over in a trauma trance, groping for the child. Archetypally speaking, the Dark Angel would represent pure evil or pure rage, pure hatred or pure negation—the death-drive, the Adversary, the Anti-Christ, the Terrorist, the Tyrant, the Accuser, the Critic. That’s his “theology” and those are his mythic characteristics.<sup>8</sup> Dante’s name for him in the Divine Comedy is “Dis” (from which we get the word dissociation). In the unconscious psyche of the trauma-survivor, the figure of Dis, or Satan is a conspicuous and ever-present threat. He is the persecutor, the inner critic, the shaming voice that attacks and denigrates every act of self-expression on the part of the trauma surviving child. He is mean and malevolent towards the wounded child in the ‘system’ because this

child is a constant threat to him. The child's neediness and misery—his wailing and crying—fills the corridors of Hell with a sound he cannot tolerate! And he fears that the child's agony might be heard outside the 'system,' making him look 'weak.'

On the right, with the terrified child in its arms is a Bright Angel, standing on a cloud, connected to the celestial world of light and love. While the dark angel attacks the links with consciousness in an effort to "kill" the child's awareness of trauma, the bright angel casts spells. He/she is a specialist in 'altered states' such as psychic numbing, states of oblivion, forgetting, "spacing out. He/She can spread the veil of illusion over the injured child and rescue it with fantasy-thinking and images of bliss or oblivion. This angel specializes in addictions—to alcohol, drugs, food, etc., anything that makes the pain go away. While the dark angel is a violent persecutor, the light angel specializes in protective illusions.

"Fake news!" says the bright angel to the inner and outer child. "It never happened! The News media is lying! Stay with Me! I will save you!" Such are the ego-sustaining illusions and delusions that the bright angel specializes in. Troubled citizens in our nation who are confused by all the suffering and moral complexity of modern life, may long for rescue by such an "angel." Unconsciously they search for someone upon whom to project this powerful psychological factor. And Donald Trump, with his blonde hair, Midas-like wealth, and golden tower in the sky makes an easy target for such projections. There are also indications that Trump himself identifies with the Bright Angel, i.e., "Only I can fix it!" he says. Identification with archetypal powers is one definition of pathological narcissism.

So both the dark and bright angels are personifications of defensive powers that serve as a dissociative self-regulatory "system." The system's first goal (as I have come to understand it) is to keep the ego of the host personality from being overwhelmed, or even annihilated, by the radioactive intensity of unbearably painful traumatic memories—memories resident in the 'child' in their care. It's second goal is to "save" a core of innocent aliveness associated with this injured child and crucial to all future development of the personality.

This 'child,' visible in the Blake illustration, is therefore a kind of "duality" just like the light and dark angels which are 'spirit-beings' in human form. On the one hand, this child stands for the wounded, orphaned empirical child of the trauma survivor, carrying the historical injuries of traumatic abuse or neglect in his/her small body. On the other hand, this child represents the trauma-survivor's innocence—the pre-traumatic core of the personality, carrying the divine spark of vitality and the instinct for life--now menaced by the great 'powers' of the light and dark angels. Both angels are dedicated to the proposition that this child *must never be violated by Reality again, i.e., its innocence must be preserved at all costs—and not allowed to leave the system.* But because of this encapsulation, the reality ego loses its capacity to tolerate feeling-experience and is weakened accordingly. Progressively the child becomes what James Grotstein<sup>9</sup> calls an "Orphan of the Real."

Once this system has taken over an individual, an autocratic and tyrannical psychology is the result. Instead of representative governance, we have a dictatorship of the angels—a tyranny of the extremes—a system that thrives only by excluding (killing or encapsulating) parts of the self that are perceived as a threat. If the trauma survivor wants to heal his/her dissociation and re-integrate the lost parts of the childhood self, it will mean re-experiencing some of the unbearable pain that led to dissociation in the first place. It will mean *re-democratizing the psyche*—inviting the banished parts back to the “table.” But the dominant powers of the defensive system resist this process of inclusion and re-integration at all costs. These powers operate, like the Jewish Defense League after the Holocaust, on the principle of “Never Again!” The problem is that if innocence *never again* risks experience, the personality does not grow.

### **Clinical Example of the Dark Angel: Slaughter of the Innocents**

Perhaps the most dramatic example of my encounter with ‘Dis’, the dark angel in the SCS, occurred many years ago in my work with an outwardly successful but inwardly depressed woman in her 60’s. She had grown up in material luxury but emotionally she had been catastrophically neglected and abused as a child. We didn’t know how bleak her childhood had been—she had virtually no memories prior to age 11—until, fortuitously, she was cleaning out her mother’s basement and found an old 8 millimeter movie taken by her father of her two-year old self and her siblings at a wedding. We watched the movie together, and there we saw herself as a toddler, desperately wandering among the tree-trunk sized legs of adults at a cocktail party trying, with mounting anxiety, to get someone to notice her distress and pick her up. Finally, she fell to the ground, banging her little fists into the gravel, sobbing and screaming, in what appeared to be a seizure of grief. Undisturbed by his daughter’s distress, the father apparently just kept filming!

As my patient and I watched this scene together, she burst into tears of compassion for her tiny self. I was also deeply moved and as we sat in silence together, she noticed that I also had tears in my eyes, and there followed a shared moment of genuine felt intimacy between us. She left the session with intense feelings of gratitude and back at her home, stayed up most of the night writing poetry and reflecting on our “moment of meeting”—alternately crying with joy for this new opening to her feelings. “You affected him!” she wrote to herself. . . . “You affected him”. “He cares about you!” That night, still feeling tearfully open, she went to sleep and had the following dream:

*Two sisters, long since separated, are anticipating a joyful reunion which is to take place on the upper balcony of a large curved double staircase shaped like a uterus. Full of excited anticipation, the patient is watching from below. One sister is waiting on the balcony as the other ascends the right-hand staircase. As she ascends, suddenly a curtain parts, and a man with a shotgun steps out and BLAM! blows her face away. She falls, bleeding and dying, rolling down the staircase as her sister, above, is overcome with grief and vomits over the bannister.*



The patient was stunned by this dream, especially on the eve of the remarkable opening to her compassionate feelings from the night before and so was I. It reminded her of Rubens painting “The Slaughter of the Innocents” which had always disturbed her. To fully understand this dream the reader is referred to *The Inner World of Trauma* (1996), pp. 19-28. For purposes of this essay, we might summarize this understanding briefly as follows:

The pain of this woman’s traumatically neglected childhood had been under strict and *authoritarian* banishment by tyrannical defenses for many years (dissociation). This inner tyranny was the source of her depression. When this childhood pain became conscious in our film session, the vulnerable ‘child’ who had been split off and insulated by her defenses began to emerge into our relationship, and the terrible split between her inner and outer life began to heal. Her tearful gratitude was the sign of this healing. In her dream, the healing moment was pictured as a joyful anticipated reunion of two sisters (parts of her feminine wholeness) who had been separated for many years, now coming together as a kind of “new birth” on a uterine-shaped staircase. One might say that she was becoming ‘whole’ i.e., the split-off parts of her were coming together and actualizing a kind of ‘democracy’ of her psyche. But there was another part of the psyche (the shot-gunner) who was dead-set against this re-union, and dead-set against her consciousness of the terrible childhood pain that was now coming up in the form of her embodied tears and sadness—together with feelings of attachment toward an outer person--myself.

This dark ‘killing’ part of the psyche (I have come to realize) is an important figure in the inner world and although he often looks like pure evil, ‘he’ did not start out as the deadly figure shown here. His original goal is to prevent consciousness of the unbearably painful feelings that have led to the trauma-survivor’s defenses in the first place. But in the process, he ends up killing the loving, dependent parts of the self and elevating the destructive, superior, and invulnerable parts—with which the patient’s ego tends to identify. He is a tyrant, and his ‘narrative’ of fear and danger is very convincing to the terror-ridden patient. My patient became vigilant at scanning for danger in the world. Painful experiences in reality now seemed like “proof” that the Killer’s fearful story was true. There were dangers everywhere. She now lived inside a pathological narrative of fear, and spent many hours obsessing about the dangers all around her. These distracted her from the genuine sadness and grief underneath—grief that (eventually, and after many years of work) would lead to greater consciousness of her true biography and to the eventual integration of the wounded and innocent ‘child’ inside herself.

The day after her dream, my patient arrived at her next session numb, confused and in a kind of trauma-trance, feeling ashamed of her ‘sick’ dream with its violence and death. “Who else has dreams like this?” she asked cynically. She had also ‘forgotten’ how she felt the night of last week’s session. In other words, her inner assassin had successfully dissociated her from any tender feelings. The orphaned ‘child’ who had so joyfully come out of its imprisonment when we saw the film together, had retreated back into its inner sanctum and become hopeless once again about life in the real world. It was as though my patient had tasted the freedom and opening of a kind of ‘Arab Spring’ such as

happened in Egypt in 2011—only to have the oppressive powers of authoritarianism clamp down again.

### **Clinical Example of the Bright Angel**

A dramatic example of the bright angel in the Self-Care System came to my attention many years ago in a story told by Esther Harding, the well known Jungian analyst from New York. It occurred in England and involved a little girl, aged 4 or 5, who was asked by her mother to take an important note to her father who was reading in his den. The little girl came back a few moments later in tears and said “Mommy, the angel won’t let me go in.” Whereupon her mother, knowing her daughter’s highly imaginative inner world, encouraged her daughter to return again to the father’s den and let the angel know that her mission was important! Soon afterwards, the child re-appeared in the kitchen, now sobbing uncontrollably and again saying “Mommy the angel won’t let me go it!” At this point the girl’s mother, exasperated, took her by the hand and marched her down the hall to the father’s room. As she entered the room, she stopped in horror as she witnessed her husband, slumped in his chair, drink spilled on the floor, dead from a massive heart attack.

This story demonstrates how the bright angel in the SCS, just like her dark counterpart, is involved in the regulation of how much the hard edges of reality are allowed to intrude upon the ego—how much of reality is allowed to become conscious. While not attacking or “killing” the child’s consciousness like the shot-gunner in the previous patient’s dream, this angel nonetheless is involved in the process of dissociation. He/she helps create an alternative reality—a “necessary illusion” to help this child over this impossible situation.

In both these cases—where light and dark angels rescue the trauma-survivor from a reality that is “too much”—there is a danger that the angels will take over the ego’s functioning. This means that if a painful reality is to be rescued from annihilation (in the first case) or illusion (in the second)—the possessing angels will have to be wrestled with and transformed. The outcome of this struggle will depend entirely on the relational resources in the patient’s environment. In the first case, my patient had a relationship with me in the transference to help her humanize her inner killer. In the second case, we don’t know whether the mother took over the angel’s mediating role or not. If she failed in this task, then the light and dark powers would have moved in as a defense and child’s removal from reality would have begun.

So to summarize: The Self-Care System gives us a picture of how the psyche dissociates under stressful or traumatic circumstances, splitting into different parts in order to tolerate otherwise unbearable experience. The preternatural powers of this system represent primitive untransformed affects and operate on an “all-or-none” principle such as good/evil, right/wrong, kill or be killed, “do or be done to.” The fragile ego, desperately needing identity and coherence, tends to *identify* with these powers—‘channels them’ as it were and becomes narcissistically inflated—larger than life—either righteously aggressive and intolerant or ‘puffed up’ and ‘invulnerable.’

None of us escapes these powers. And none of us escapes the responsibility of struggling to transform them. They lie hidden under the surface of our conscious lives, threatening to erupt and sweep away everything we have built up in our painstaking efforts to channel them into containing personal relationships on the one hand or into the cultural forms, social institutions, or binding laws and legal restraints that preserve the fragile human values that make life worth living in our country. *The 'powers' are indifferent to these fragile accomplishments.* They are *daimonic*, a-moral, chillingly disinterested in human affairs. They pursue their own blind 'intentions' as indifferently as the Olympian Gods and Goddesses that so menaced the ancient Greeks with their power-mongering arrogance, their narcissistic infatuations, and their envious caprices. It is up to us to "humanize" them if we can. Everything depends on consciousness and the willingness to struggle in our human relationships, and within our cultural and legal institutions, to relate to, and *transform*, the indifferent destructive powers that menace us.<sup>10</sup>

### **Walter Wink and the Powers in the Social Order**

The light and dark angels of what I call the Self-Care System are not just intra-psychic powers. According to 20<sup>th</sup> Century protestant theologian Walter Wink, they have always existed and have always threatened the establishment of democratic human communities throughout history. Wink makes clear for example, that the elemental 'powers' were especially menacing to the early Christians as they tried to establish small centers of worship around the Middle East. The Apostle Paul for example, wrote the following warning to the Ephesians (6:12)

For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities (archas), against the powers (exousias), against the world rulers (kosmokratoras) of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts (pneumatika) of wickedness in the heavenly places.<sup>11</sup>

Wink's writings are useful for our purposes, because he makes clear that the elemental powers are beyond personal. They are archetypal, spiritual, 'cosmic' and they find their way into social and institutional life. In other words, they exist in the culture all around us, and, while invisible, they have profound unseen impact everywhere. In a telling description, Wink says:

"Every institution has its angel, i.e., its own unique spirit and this spirit is every bit as important as the physical [historical, economic, or social]... aspects of institutions. If someone violates this spirit, though he keeps all the laws and precepts of the system, the system will condemn him... *Conversely, if someone submits to this spirituality, he will be able to live in spite of violating all its laws and flouting all its institutions.*" (Italics Mine)

I think this statement is relevant to the dark spirit (angel) that has moved into our American national psyche--a dark spirit of which Donald Trump is only the most conspicuous avatar. Before the 2016 election at a campaign stop in Sioux City Iowa Trump said..." "The polls, you know, they say I have the most loyal people. Did you

ever see that? Where I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any voters, okay? It's like incredible!"

Trump is recognizing here the dark spiritual wave he is riding and the fact that his "base" is mesmerized by its angel. As has become painfully clear since the first two years of his presidency, once this spirituality is in place, Trump continues to live, in spite of violating all the nation's laws and flouting all its institutions." And no-one can understand how he gets away with it. He, like all the rest of us, is living inside a pathology--riding the dark spiritual energy that infuses a dissociative psychology with its violence, contempt and corruption on the one hand and its illusion of American innocence and magical 'greatness' on the other (Make America Great Again!).

### **Struggles to Transform the Powers: Conflict Psychology- Dwight Eisenhower**

In this section, I propose to look at two examples from our national life of men who were possessed by hatred from their dark angels, and how this archetypal affect was transformed into usable aggression—or not. The stories of these two men illustrate the difference between a healthy conflict psychology (Eisenhower) on the one hand, and an unhealthy dissociative psychology (Trump) on the other. Both men shared a childhood and adolescence full of powerful violent emotion. The first story about Dwight Eisenhower is reported by David Brooks in his recent book *The Road to Character*.<sup>12</sup>

Dwight Eisenhower was one of five boys raised by Ida and David Eisenhower in relative poverty in Abilene Texas. David was a rigid man and strict disciplinarian while Ida had a warm, vibrant personality. Dwight would later call her "the finest person I've ever known" (Brooks, p. 50). One of the things Ida did for Dwight was to help him with his hate. Like Donald Trump, he had an innately aggressive and rebellious disposition that he would have to temper and discipline all his life to become the great General and later President that he was. Here is the story.

"One Halloween evening, when he was about ten, Eisenhower's older brothers received permission to go out trick-or-treating, a more adventurous activity in those days than it is now. Ike wanted to go with them, but his parents told him he was too young. He pleaded with them, watched his brothers go, and then became engulfed by uncontrolled rage. He turned red. His hair bristled. Weeping and screaming, he rushed out into the front yard and began pounding his fists against the trunk of an apple tree, scraping the skin off and leaving his hands bloody and torn.

"His father shook him, lashed him with a hickory switch, and sent him up to bed. About an hour later, with Ike sobbing into his pillow, his mother came up and sat silently rocking in the chair next to his bed. Eventually she quoted a verse from the Bible: "He that conquereth his own soul is greater than he who taketh a city."

As she began to salve and bandage his wounds, Ida Eisenhower told her son to beware the anger and hatred that burned inside. Hatred is a futile thing, she told

him which only injures the person who harbors it. Of all her boys, she told him, he had the most to learn about controlling his passions. (p. 52)

Much later, when he was seventy-six, Eisenhower wrote, “I have always looked back on that conversation as one of the most valuable moments of my life.” His mother had never shamed him and had helped him hold his raging conflict in a compassionate and loving way. At the end of the conversation, Eisenhower admitted to his mother that he was wrong and felt sufficiently reconciled in his mind to fall off to sleep.

In this case the young Eisenhower’s avenging angel erupted in rage, but was later held in a loving relationship and transformed into both inner conflict (“I was wrong”), and usable anger—eventually, even gratitude. A person who has accomplished this can witness, and accept, his own personal complicity with evil— his own episodic identification with the dark angel and its raging tantrums, and take responsibility for the harm he/she has done, or would like to do. Such a person can be in conflict with himself—can eventually see both sides of an issue without being ‘triggered’ into defensive rage again. This in turn leads to an enhanced capacity for empathy with others—a growing moral center, deeper friendships--and greater resilience in the face of life’s inevitable hurts, disappointments, and painful limitations.

These hard-won achievements of a conflict-psychology and inner democracy lead further to a quickening of the human soul and a grasp of what we might call the *tragic nature of human life*. By the ‘tragic nature of human life’ I am thinking about Heinz Kohut’s sympathetic portrayal of “Tragic Man” as distinguished from Freud’s “Guilty Man.” For Kohut, the mature individual has gone beyond the conflict between his instinctual demands (angels) and the prohibitions of ‘civilization’ to the larger, more existential conflict between his child-like aspirations and their ‘innocent’ hopes on the one hand, and his poignant, sad awareness of the limitations imposed by privations and misfortunes including our mortality and death on the other. This leads for Kohut not to sadness, pessimism or despair but rather to the deep joy that attends our capacity to integrate the tragic aspects of life and accept ourselves, along with others, “as transient participants in the ongoing stream of life” (Kohut, 1977, p. 237). We embrace what William Wordsworth described in ‘Tintern Abbey’ as the universally human and profoundly beautiful “still, sad music of humanity.”<sup>13</sup>

Dwight Eisenhower was lucky to have had the kind of compassionate containment that his mother provided him on this occasion—and probably on many others. It gave him choices about how much of his rage and anger to unleash on the world later. He became one of the most effective generals in all of history, directing massive amounts of aggression against the Nazi enemy in the European theatre. But his aggressive use of this power was no longer motivated by primitive hatred or identification with his ‘avenging angel.’ He had mastered and neutralized his high-voltage hatred and converted it into anger he could talk about and use. He had wrested with his dark angel and received its blessing. It was he who warned us later of the dangers of the “military-industrial complex.”

## Struggles to Transform the Powers: Dissociative Psychology – Donald Trump

It was different with Donald Trump. One of Trump's moments of rage was captured by a PBS Front Line documentary called *The Choice* about Donald Trump's life (the full episode can be found on PBS.org *Frontline* minutes 57:28—60:15)

A partial transcript of the documentary describes how Trump...

.....“had hit it big with Trump tower. At 40 he claimed he was a billionaire. He was determined to make Trump a household name. ... By the late 1980's Donald Trump's ambition pushed him into uncharted territory, presidential politics. He liked the publicity. He liked the notoriety....and even began to insert himself into controversial issues in New York City, for example the Central Park 'jogger case'...It was the ages of accused-- 14 to 17 years-- and the horror of their alleged crime that caused a furor. “A woman jogging in New York Central Park raped and nearly beaten to death.” What happened in Central Park was a violation to him. He felt it keenly and had a deep emotional reaction to it and so he lashed out....He took out a full page add that read: “*Bring Back the Death Penalty, Bring Back Our Police.*” He said the black suspects who allegedly did this should be executed.... “they're beasts... they're animals...”

*“You better believe that I HATE the people that took this girl and raped her brutally. You better believe it! And it's more than anger. It's HATRED! And I want society to hate 'em.”*

The commentator continues....

“The unstated text of this was that because there were 5 minority kids who brutalized a white woman in Central Park and everybody's outraged about it...and they're different from us.... so we need to treat them with the severest methods possible. The 5 young men spent years in prison but were later exonerated when the actual rapist admitted his guilt. But Donald Trump never apologized. He didn't want to admit he was wrong. And to this day he's not apologized for the statement he made at the time.

But for Trump, his television rage had worked....his celebrity was bigger than ever. And the talk of President Trump had begun.”

To me this television documentary is a good illustration of the co-presence of innocence and violence in the psyche of Donald Trump—the invisible ‘child’ in the system and its protective and persecutory angels—especially the violent angel known as “Dis”. Some part of Trump was unconsciously *identified* with the violated young girl's innocence. He himself felt violated. We don't begrudge him this reaction—his outrage--about the crime that violated an innocent girl. But notice what happened next. Trump wasn't satisfied with expressing his feelings and leaving the rest to law enforcement. He was filled with ultra-human passion—inflated hatred—off the spectrum of potentially constructive

aggression—identified with his avenging angel. He needed to ACT on these feelings in order to discharge them. This is characteristic of a dissociative psychology. Action discharges affect. Conflict is avoided. To promote this discharge, Trump vilified the black youths that were suspects in the case calling them beasts and animals, destroying in his mind any innocent humanity they may have possessed--reducing them to the totalistic category of evil and thereby justifying more hate, demanding their deaths.

Lets imagine he had been in a position to execute these five men like he recommended--and that they were then exonerated later after their deaths, i.e., proven innocent. One can hardly imagine the outrage and hatred in the black community! This is how the un-mediated binary structures and all-or-none stereotyping of the primitive neurological system and its 'angels' promotes precipitous action and leads to the destructive chain-reaction we have seen so often in our country.

It is frightening to realize how much of US foreign policy has been based on such binary thinking, vilification, and precipitous action in defense of innocence. George W. Bush made Saddam Hussein into an evil man in his mind, claiming he was about to use weapons of mass destruction against innocent people, and this justified a “shock and awe” bombing campaign in which tens of thousands of *actual innocent people* died. When it was discovered that there were no such weapons....well, Oops, sorry....but there was no acknowledgement—no apology, no genuine regret. And we wonder why extremists in the Muslim world hate us and blow up our buildings!

Hateful action from one dissociative psychology breeds more hateful action from an other. The result is the vicious cycle known as the “retributive justice cycle” leading from one violent action to another *ad infinitum*. There is no room for a struggle with avenging angels—no taming of the “powers”--in this madness. Which is why some of our greatest social justice leaders (Lincoln, King, Ghandi) have recommended non-violent resistance in an effort to break this retributive cycle. Such non-violent resistance is in the democratic tradition of the New Testament prophet who said (Matthew 5:37-39)<sup>14</sup>

Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ *Anything more comes from the evil one* (italics mine).

In the discipline of non-violence, a conflict must be taken “in”—and not acted “out.” This is a form of suffering and sacrifice required by a democracy of the psyche. “*Anything more comes from the evil one*” says Jesus in the above passage--i.e., from the avenging angel ‘Dis’ in the defensive ‘system’ whose ‘powers’ seduce us into action.

In Part I of Goethe’s Faust, the poet laments, “alas, two souls dwell within my breast.” This is the ultimate lament of a conflict-psychology—of an inner democracy. Alas!..... we are divided within ourselves. We love and we hate—angelically!--and we have a core of innocence and “divine entitlement” that paradoxically justifies either love or hate, but not the two in conflict, together. So we need to be constantly reminded “*Simply let your Yes be ‘Yes’ and your No, ‘No.’ Anything more comes from the evil one.*” Democracy grounds the angels in our human-all-too-human limitations. But it requires suffering of

the opposites (wrestling with our angels) and we would rather do almost anything to avoid this! A dissociative psychology always lets us off the hook of suffering the “two souls that dwell within our breast?”

## **Part Two**

When I was a child, there was a special object in my Grandfather’s study that fascinated me, and that I played with for hours. I didn’t know what it was then, but since discovered that it was called a Stereopticon, or “magic lantern.” Its “magic” was that it used two images to create a three-dimensional effect. In the remainder of this essay, I want to do the same thing. Specifically, I would like to review three issues in our current culture, side by side with the two psychologies I have outlined above, in hopes that our collective experience might come into focus in a deeper, more three-dimensional way. The three areas of concern are (1) Conspiracy Theory and one of its major advocates, Alex Jones; (2) Immigration and Exclusion vs. Inclusion; and (3) The American gun culture and the psychology of mass murder.

But first a brief description of how collective trauma has taken over the American psyche.

### **A Traumatized American People and Defenses Against Reality**

Trauma is universal in human life and always has been. It has to do with the fact that *we are all given more to experience in this life than we can bear to experience consciously*. This “inability to bear what we are given” within an open ego-structure, is the root of all psychological difficulty because it generates anxiety which in turn generates dissociative defenses and these defenses are made up of the ‘great powers’ we have been exploring.

Is it possible, then, that we, as American citizens, are facing ‘more’ in our contemporary world situation than we can bear to experience consciously? In other words, have we inadvertently fallen into the violence and illusion of a dissociative ‘system’ in our national life? Are we confronted by terrors and incomprehensible problems on our globalized world-stage that simply cannot be understood or metabolized--overwhelming our integrative capacities as a people? Leading us to fall back on the ‘fundaments’ of the totalitarian inner system—making us ‘fundamentalists?’

I believe these are reasonable questions and that the answer to them, from my perspective, is a definite ‘Yes!’ Many of my patients are afraid, these days (and I along with them), to turn on the news. We are afraid of the trauma-generating images we will be exposed to—the children starving in war-torn African nations, images of dead immigrants washed up on the shore, stories of mass killing of innocents in our schools by armed teenagers shooting fellow students in the face with high powered rifles, journalists beheaded by ISIS fighters or radical government thugs, devastation by wild fires caused by out-of-control global warming, destruction of rainforests and wildlife habitat, ushering in a “Sixth Extinction”, with the mass die-off of life-forms occurring all around us.



These REALITIES are bad enough. Worse still is the fact that they come to us embedded in a “news-cycle” full of willful ignorance, corruption, dishonesty and greed where our ‘leaders’ spend their energy blaming others instead of offering constructive solutions. Meanwhile the “news” media, instead of educating us on the complexities of the issues that face us, obsessively covers every story of corruption and outrage to satisfy our seemingly endless appetite for scandal, lies, and malicious gossip. Never have the dire warnings of the poet<sup>15</sup> been more prescient... “the best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

Robert J. Lifton has written a remarkable book called *The Climate Swerve: Reflections on Mind, Hope, and Survival*. In it, he examines the psychological reaction to the threat of Nuclear annihilation on the one hand, and the creeping threat of climate change (and what Tom Singer calls ‘extinction anxiety’) on the other. Both, he says, call forth the dissociative defense of psychic numbing.

Such numbing...has to do with the mind’s resistance to the unmanageable extremity of the catastrophe, to the infinite reaches of death and pain... We find ourselves continuously searching for—and also resisting--images that might help us to take in what is an unprecedented phenomenon. With both nuclear and climate threats, we have trouble “imagining the real”. No wonder we tend to see each of them as beyond description or comprehension, as driven by otherworldly forces that render us tiny and helpless, rather than as lethal mechanisms we ourselves have created and are quite capable of understanding. Both call forth the unmanageable imagery of extinction...and lead to psychic numbing, the human equivalent to the way animals “freeze” (sometimes called “playing dead”) when threatened and lacking a path of either resistance or escape. The widespread numbing created by nuclear and climate imagery of extinction can be understood as playing dead on the part of the majority of people on earth. (p. 36-7)

Psychic numbing and “playing dead” are dissociative defenses. They come into being when we need an ‘escape when there is no escape.’ The angels in the Self Care System know how to facilitate the illusion of such an escape. That’s what they ‘do.’

### **“Fake News” and Defenses Against Reality:**

As we have seen, trauma survivors often become “Orphans of the Real” Reality has assaulted them with “too much—too soon.” Fear floods their fragile ego’s and soon archetypal defenses grow up around their vulnerabilities to avenge the wrongs of their unfair treatment and protect them from further feelings of humiliation and shame. Soon they are living in an altered reality.

Our current President is a master of such illusionism, identified as he is with the bright angel in the SCS. It started very early in Trump’s presidency, at his Inauguration. In William Davies recent book *Nervous States: Democracy and the Decline of Reason*,<sup>16</sup> he reminds us of Donald Trumps skirmish with the press over the size of his inauguration crowd. The New York Times had published an estimate, suggesting that the size of the

crowd was only one third the one at Obama's inauguration which had been estimated at 1.8 million. Comparative overhead photos had supported the Times estimate. But Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary accused the press of trying to "minimize the enormous support" that Trump had attracted, claiming that the crowd was in fact "the largest audience ever to witness an inauguration, period." When he was accused of lying, Trump advisor Kelly-Anne Conway told the public that Spicer had simply offered "alternative facts" to the ones believed by the journalists.

Later Trump accused the press of persecuting him and insulting him, complaining to a reporter "they demean me unfairly." He then pointed to a photograph of the crowd that he claimed was from a better angle..."I call it a sea of love" he said.

For Davies, this is an example of *how polarized emotion smothers rational discourse* (Italics mine). "For Trump this was no mere disagreement over 'facts,'" Davies writes. "It was an opposition between two emotions: the arrogant sneer of his critics and the love of his supporters." (p. 4) In the light of the analysis I am pursuing in this essay, these polarized emotions are none other than the two angels in the dissociative 'system' with which Trump alternately identifies.

Thus, for Donald Trump and his allies, climate change and global warming are a "Chinese hoax" and other facts that make him look bad, like paying off sexual playmates to protect his campaign-- are "fake news." The appearance of Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen before the House Judiciary Committee contained such humiliating testimony that the President pronounced it a "fake hearing." This is how our President negotiates a painful reality--by denying its existence. Disagreeable facts are not allowed to penetrate the fragile boundary of his fortress-self, defended by the light and dark angels. If he were to accept these negative reports and allow himself to feel something other than defensive outrage about them, (i.e. grief, guilt, remorse, sadness, shame) he would suddenly be in conflict with himself. This would make him a tragic figure like the rest of us--and one we might be inclined to cut some slack. Instead he refuses to join the human struggle and sits alone in his tower, untouchable, 'victimized' by the press, surrounded by his illusions of innocence, tweeting dictation from his possessing angels. He is a modern-day Nero, fiddling while Democracy burns.

### **Conspiracy Theories**

Recently I went for a walk in the nearby arroyo here in Santa Fe. Along the winding sandy river-bottom I remember pausing for a moment to watch a flock of beautiful Stellar Jays feeding in the trees above. An elderly couple happened by, walking their large German Shepherd dog and, seeing me looking skyward, said sympathetically "looking at those chemtrails are you?" Perplexed, I explained I was looking at the birds, and then, looking higher, noticed the contrails from jets planes criss-crossing the sky. "Do you mean those?" I asked..."jet contrails?" "Yea," the man said, and we began a conversation. I soon realized I was going down the rabbit hole into a completely alternate reality. "You should know about those chemtrails!" the woman warned ominously. There's lots of

evidence showing how the government is trying to alter the weather around here—or worse! You can Google it if you want.”

So I did Google it and found several links that led inevitably along the path of the “chemtrail conspiracy theory,” an apparently very active subject on the web--to which more and more people are turning for their “news” these days. The whole phantasmal scheme is based on the skewed belief that the contrails of jet-engine exhaust are really “chemtrails” consisting of chemical or biological agents sprayed by the government in a secret scheme to test weapons, change the weather, or mitigate climate change. Here was a little window into the American Psyche that was really quite disturbing.

Apparently for these likeable folks, out walking their dog on a sunny afternoon, a conspiracy theory made sense of a world that was otherwise overwhelming and, apparently, very frightening. Undifferentiated anxiety is much worse than fear. With their conspiracy theory, at least they had something to fear. They knew who the “enemy” was. If reality was too much to bear, or too complicated to comprehend, or just not to their liking, then “chemtrails” offered them a simple explanation for the incomprehensible and ever-changing things that they saw around them. And there were enough sites on the Internet that *looked like* news for them to be convinced. Apparently the posts of conspiracy crackpots on Google had become their source news about reality, so it was with complete confidence that they could tell me to “Google it!”

As I left the scene and continued my walk, I wondered how many more of my wealthy neighbors in Santa Fe had drunk this particular cool aide. Sadly, it turns out that the answer is apparently “many!”

Kurt Anderson’s best-selling book *Fantasyland: How America Went Haywire—a 500 year History*,<sup>17</sup> chronicles some of the remarkable illusions/delusions that seem to have taken over our American consciousness. Anderson points out that we Americans have always been wide-eyed idealists, true believers and passionate dreamers but that lately, various cultural and technological developments have taken us “over the edge” and “down the rabbit hole.” Among these developments, he highlights the substitution of opinions for facts that emerged with the repeal of the Federal Fairness Doctrine in the 1980’s and how the subsequent vacuum was filled by right-wing radio talk-shows—Rush Limbaugh, then Fox News, MSNBC etc. Now, instead of receiving a single standard version of the news on one of the three major broadcast networks (CBS, ABC, NBC), Americans were locked into their Silos, listening to their own private, partisan and emotion-driven versions of the truth. In addition, says Anderson, the Internet amplifies the problem with crackpot opinions, broadcast all over the airwaves—looking like real news. The result is what he calls the “fantasy-industrial complex.” It promotes pure subjectivity over objectivity— so that people now think and act *as if opinions and feelings were just as true as facts*.

Anderson’s statistics are frightening: Roughly 25 percent of Americans, he says, believe that the government and its co-conspirators are hiding all sorts of monstrous truths from us—concerning assassinations, extraterrestrials, the genesis of AIDS, how vaccines cause

autism etc. A similar quarter of the population believe that Barack Obama is the Antichrist and was born in Kenya, that Donald Trump really won the popular vote in 2016, that U.S. officials were complicit in the 9/11 attacks and that “the media or the government adds secret mind-controlling technology to television broadcast signals” etc. (6-7) Anderson estimates that roughly a hundred million Americans have strongly conspiracist predispositions and ideas while a small but significant fraction of that—perhaps several million—“are committed to beliefs that seem symptomatic of mental illness” (p. 359)

### **The Education of Alex Jones**

Alex Jones is a case in point. Jones began his career in the 1990’s and has thousands upon thousands of followers as well as an annual income of at least twenty million dollars. In 1995, he accused the U.S. government of planning the Oklahoma City bombing. Then six years later, he made a similar claim about the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the World Trade Center. He sees climate change as a hoax perpetrated by a “New World Order” of financial elites who profit by fueling exploitable hysteria. Evil lurks everywhere for Alex Jones.

But the most flagrant of his delusions—and one that he has promulgated over the airwaves and the Internet for 7 years now, is that the massacre of 20 innocent children by Adam Lanza at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown Connecticut in 2012.... *never happened!* It was a “false flag” operation, he says, engineered by gun control advocates to drum up support for “taking our guns away.” In Jones’ language “no-one died.” It was “a synthetic completely fake event with actors.”<sup>18</sup>

Jones might be easily dismissed as a complete crackpot—a minor fringe figure on the radical right--were it not for the fact that he has the ear of the President of the United States! The “fringe” has now been folded into the center. Trump appeared as a candidate on Alex Jones’ show in 2016 and after the election phoned him with effusive praise and gratitude for his role in the campaign.<sup>19</sup>

Alex Jones is a significant case study for our purposes in this essay, because he has just fallen out of his Self Care System and into a reality that he finds intolerable. His case graphically illustrates the dissociative psychology we have been exploring and how the culture has colluded to keep it in place. The story emerged in a recent New York Times article by Charlie Warzel published on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 and entitled “Why Courtrooms Are Kryptonite for Alex Jones.” The article described a three-hour deposition under oath as Jones was questioned by attorneys for ten families who had sued him in a defamation lawsuit for his role in spreading conspiracy theories that had caused survivors of the massacre to be harassed, stalked, and threatened. These families had won a series of court rulings that required Jones to testify. Attorneys then posted his deposition online for everyone to see. Tens of thousands of viewers did.

Warzel describes Jones’ heavy sighing and wincing under aggressive questioning from the attorneys—totally out of control—suddenly forced to admit that his “*confidential*

*sources” are really nothing more than message board trolls and cranks.* The attorneys make him read from a disturbing police report, chronicling the testimony of emergency medical workers and then immediately watch footage of his past broadcasts denying the violence was real. As he squirms and tries to revert to his meandering soliloquies and belligerent verbal outbursts from his broadcast persona, attorneys cut him off and dismiss his answers as “non-responsive.” For the first time, his anger is caged. He blames “the media”, suggests that he is the victim of an unfair smear campaign, tries to cast doubt on film clips that are shown him, claiming they were altered or heavily edited...”fake news, all of it!” he says. But Jones’ efforts to flood every topic with confusion and doubt do not work with the lawyers doing his deposition.

His tactics fall flat, and finally, he falls apart—and falls into reality. Near the end of the deposition he admits that the killing at Sandy Hook was real. Then he suggests that his claims about the massacre being fake were the result of a mental disorder! “I almost had like a form of psychosis back in the past where I basically thought everything was staged, even though I’m now learning a lot of times things aren’t staged” he said.

Alex Jones was indeed learning. He was learning from reality and the lessons were painful. He began to face the fact that some things in the outer world are so horrific that we can’t metabolize them. They are unthinkable. We have to dissociate them....or deny that they ever happened. Alex Jones discovered that he had been living in a ‘system’ of complete denial. Powerful forces (dark angels) were helping him to “kill” his consciousness of reality and then to weave comforting delusions around his pain (bright angel). His “feelings” and the opinions they generated had become his “facts.” Now he saw that his ‘evidence’ was an echo-chamber consisting of the postings of trolls and cranks. When he finally broke down under the insistent questioning of the attorneys, there was a “moment” when Alex Jones entered a conflict psychology. He was forced by the legal system itself to finally wrestle with his angels instead of just channeling them. He was asked to embrace his own “democracy of the psyche.” Suddenly, he had to face his own complicity with evil—his own lying, his own dissociative defenses and to look directly into the eyes of his own duplicity. It was not a sight he tolerated easily. He became almost human. He started to cry. This lasted for only a moment. Then quickly he returned to his victim/perpetrator story. He blamed his mental illness—another way to keep his innocence from suffering experience—to keep it enshrined in amber--another way for him to avoid responsibility.

### **Immigration, the Wall, and a Personal Lesson in Inclusiveness**

Recently, at a local restaurant, I had a brief struggle with my own intolerance at the “border” of my own identity. On a small scale, this experience put me in touch with the issues of inclusion vs. exclusion that define a spectrum of opinions on the Immigration Crisis at our southern border.

My wife Robin and I were having a birthday dinner, tucked into a small table in the corner near the end of a long bank of tables pushed together apparently to accommodate a large party expected at the restaurant. Half way through the meal a huge gentleman—

perhaps 6'4 and 300 lbs sat down at the assembled tables and motioned the waiter over. I overheard the conversation. "Could we move some chairs around a bit, because we have some very large folks joining us?" he asked. Soon an obese woman waddled in—she must have been 400 lbs—followed by what looked like her sister--equally large. One of them sat on two chairs pushed together...the other in the window seat. Two others soon joined them. Then after a few minutes, each of these large individuals got up and walked to the bathroom, pushing their way through the other tables, in one case pulling the table cloth off a nearby table and creating a moment of chaos and irritation among the diners.

I could feel my *disapproval* rising (recall that Dante's name for the dark angel in the SCS is 'Dis'). And my negative judgments. "Thank God," I thought, "I'm not on an airplane with someone like THAT sitting next to me." I began to feel that these people were pushing into my boundaries in some way and I was building internal walls against them to preserve some implicit 'superiority' in myself. They constituted my own private "caravan" from Guatemala! I began to wrestle with my angels. "How difficult it must be for them," I thought. "They must be shunned and denigrated on a regular basis...it's a shame" "But then" I wondered, "why don't they lost weight? They have a choice after all, don't they? On the other hand, maybe they don't have a choice....maybe it's glandular or inherited. Or perhaps they are addicted....maybe all trauma survivors with intractable defenses." Back and forth went my inner argument. At one moment I was open--even sympathetic--to these women and at another, contemptuous toward them. And for this contempt I felt ashamed of myself. Then, to complicate matters, I began to feel an inner resentment for the scolding I was giving myself about my bigoted, exclusive, elitist attitudes. I could imagine what a relief it would be *not to feel ashamed* of these negative reactions—not to be so politically "correct" for once. I could feel my inner Donald Trump and it disturbed me. In short, I was having a struggle staying "within" a conflict psychology.

In retrospect I realized that this conflict within myself was—quintessentially—a democratic negotiation among the various parts of my feelings and reactions, and that I was clearly in a wrestling match with my dark angel—and maybe my bright angel too, hiding in the idealized "shoulds" behind my negative judgments. I was in a major conflict with my feelings—a readiness to love and a readiness to hate. I also realized how much GUILT I had to suffer to stay inside this conflict, and how much I wanted to get RID of this guilt almost as much as I wanted to get rid of these people!

This moment, for me, was a lesson in our national obsession with Immigration and the Wall that Donald Trump wants to build. Democracy is *inclusive*, with complicated solutions to complicated problems while Totalitarianism is *exclusive* with easy simple answers. In this restaurant I was clearly both. A democratic psychology requires a lot of mental/psychological struggle and the capacity to hold conflicted feelings (to suffer them), while a dissociative psychology doesn't hold conflict. It builds walls. It is phobic about conflict and intolerant of the mixed feelings that must be held while conflict is resolved. It simply projects the "bad" and gets ride of it with an avenging angel. In order to justify his Wall, Trump must make immigrants "bad", so he calls them terrorists and rapists and says they bring drugs and disease, and must be kept OUT. In this way he fans

the fires of anxiety in the people, and then purports to put these fires out with a simple solution—the Wall.

At one time in our history it was different. In 1886 the Statue of Liberty was given to the people of the United States by the people of France to honor the American-French alliance that won the Revolutionary War, and to celebrate the open-hearted welcome that our nation had given to displaced European refugees who flooded by the thousands through New York Harbor and found refuge and a new home on American soil. “God’s Crucible” is what the playwright Israel Zangwill called the new nation in his 1908 play *The Melting-Pot*. In that play, the main character—a Russian immigrant--rhapsodized about the new American inclusiveness:

Ah, what a stirring and a seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian...black and yellow...how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God....What is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem where all nations and races come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labor and look forward!<sup>20</sup>

This was a remarkable testimony to the equality and potential openness of the young Democracy and to the spirit of Democracy everywhere! And inscribed on the base of the statue is a moving poem by Emma Lazarus that expresses the essence of this inclusive attitude. In fact, Lady Liberty may be the best representation we have of what Abraham Lincoln, in his Second Inaugural, meant by the “better angels of our nature”—not the two angels of violence and illusion we have been exploring as part of a dissociative psychology, but a third angle, the angel of democracy herself:

Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me.  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

Democracy makes room for the “wretched” and the “homeless”—for *‘les miserables’*, the miserable ones. They too are to be included. The light held high in the lamp of Lady Liberty is a stirring symbol for the wholeness that democratic diversity and inclusiveness signify. And the Wall is a perfect symbol for its opposite—a dissociative psychology that excludes. Inclusiveness vs. Exclusiveness. These are not a pair of opposites but competing psychologies, competing politics. Both are necessary for the proper regulation of what gets “in” and what stays “out” of America. There would be no possibility for inclusiveness if we didn’t have firm boundaries. Walls are necessary, including on our Southern Border, especially today when immigrants are flooding in from failed states in South America. When Nancy Pelosi pronounces that “the Wall is an immorality,” she is flirting with extremism and coming dangerously close to a dissociative psychology. Walls are necessary. Walls, as Robert Frost said, make good neighbors. But they need windows and doors and apertures through which we can embrace otherness when we

want to. They need to be supported by an “immigration policy” which is informed by the better angels of our nature—the angels of democracy—not the angels of fear and exclusion.

### **Guns as Angel-Weapons: Mass Murder in America**

I grew up with guns in a family of outdoorsmen. My father, grandfather, and uncles, all hunted. I know the heady power of shooting guns—the explosive power when you pull the trigger, the speed and impact of the bullets or shot charges, the thrill of hitting a moving target at a distance, the power to kill an animal or bird and the ritual of cleaning and eating wild game. Having a gun in your hands is having immediate access to archetypal power—power that amplifies the limited power of the body—the powers of great warriors, heroes and Gods. Guns make you strong and powerful. Knowing how to use a gun makes you special in the eyes of men. Guns make others afraid. Guns are powerful defenses—880 volts of untransformed power. *Guns are angel weapons!*

I know these things because my loving father, who was a talented professional man with a big local reputation and many creative abilities, was also angry and afraid. Afraid of blacks, afraid of communists, afraid of “anti-gun liberals” who might “take our guns away.” My father grew up in a neighborhood in Detroit where he was bullied and picked on. He was a skinny, weak kid with asthma but he built himself up by boxing and weight-lifting and then he bought guns. Teddy Roosevelt was his hero. He would regale me with stories of the wild West and how the colt revolver was the “great equalizer” on the frontier, making even weak men strong. And how an armed militia was the best defense against a possible takeover of the country by communists. He kept a colt revolver in his bedside table and practiced “dry-firing” at Indians riding horses around the wagon trains in TV Westerns. Once he accidentally shot out the television set after re-loading his gun, falling asleep and waking to the sound of a cavalry charge! My mother thought he had killed himself, but he was only defending the household against menacing Indians!

I inherited my guns from my father but I have now given them up....sold them all 10 years ago after a significant spiritual crisis, following my viewing of the movie *War Horse* with my wife Robin. That’s another story.<sup>21</sup> But one reason I gave up my guns is because of the dissociative psychology of the gun-culture in America—especially the fear-mongering, paranoid psychology sponsored by the National Rifle Association. Over the course of my lifetime, the terrified, tormented and violently defended psychology of the NRA has become a malignant cancer in the American psyche and a true threat to the democratic values that I hold dear.

The psychology at the center of the NRA is built around FEAR and DEFENSE. It is a perfect collective national out-picturing of the Self-Care System with its violent and sentimental illusions (light and dark angels) and the fragile, weak, and innocent child in their care. For the NRA the ‘child’ is America’s innocence, goodness, and exceptionalism—the shining city on a hill. And the threats against this fragile center are perceived to be everywhere. During the cold war it used to be Communists but with the



collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the threats have metastasized to include criminal gangs, jihadist Islamic terrorists, Antifa leftists, and even what Wayne LaPierre called “jackbooted government thugs coming to harass and intimidate law abiding citizens” and take away everyone’s guns. The main threat, at the center of NRA paranoia is the government itself, threatening to take away our constitutional rights to self-defense.

There is no awareness in this psychology of the extreme distortions emanating from the heroic angels of the NRA’s system—especially the dark one named ‘Dis.’ The whole organization lives in terror. As fears mount in the national psyche, the only thing the gun lobby is able to imagine is giving the good guys more guns! And not just more guns, but bigger guns, AK 47’s, assault rifles, machine guns—more archetypal power to defeat our human fears—to keep our unconscious vulnerabilities at bay....to ‘kill’ them if we can. This is a fascist state of mind, and the apotheosis of the dissociative psychology we have been exploring. Seeing evil everywhere, it sets the stage for our own possession by evil, and there is no better example of this than the mass shootings of innocent people occurring with increasing frequency in our schools, churches, mosques and synagogues.

### **Adolph Hitler**

To understand the psychology of evil that enters our collective American experience through mass shootings such as occurred in Newtown Ct., or Parkland Florida, we must understand how the demon of destructive rage finds its way into the dissociated *individual* psyche and what it wants to ‘kill’ there. Almost always, the host personality who houses such a killer has a personal history in which his own vulnerability was brutally violated, humiliated, and shamed, so that he has become hateful of the tender aspects of his own experience.

Adolph Hitler provides a prime example. Here is Alice Miller’s<sup>22</sup> description

Hitler was brutally beaten by his father during his early life--sometimes to the point of unconsciousness. He became hardened, "counter-dependent" and shut off his feelings by counting the blows on his body--once there were 32 of them that he bragged about taking without a tear. Feeling utterly humiliated, shamed and weak, but unable to cry, Hitler went on to write: "My pedagogy is hard. What is weak must be hammered away. In my fortresses of the Teutonic Order a young generation will grow up before which the world will tremble. I want the young to be violent, domineering, undismayed, cruel. The young must be all these things. They must be able to bear pain. There must be nothing weak or gentle about them. The free, splendid beast of prey must once again flash from their eyes. I want my young people strong and beautiful. That way I can create something new."

This quote from *Mein Kampf* illustrates the dissociation of childhood parts of the psyche that carry painful memories split off from destructive narcissistic parts of the self which provide a sense of invulnerability, superiority and inflated self-esteem. The tension

between these parts is resolved by “killing” the vulnerable dependent parts in identification with the avenging ‘angel’ in the system—just like my patient’s shotgunner murdered the young girl in her dream. In his identification with this dark angel, Hitler prepares to wreak vengeance on whole nations and peoples as a way of getting even for the cruelty he experienced as a child.

### **Nikolas Cruz and the Psychology of Mass Murder**

Hitler’s psychology is alive and well in the America of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On Valentine’s day in 2018, a young man named Nikolas Cruz who had been expelled from his High School the year before because of angry behavior, took an AR 15 style semiautomatic rifle with many magazines of ammunition and walked into his former school in Parkland Florida. He then went on a six-minute rampage, shooting into locked classrooms and through windows and walls and blasting people in the hallways. He killed 17 people, 14 of them students. Then, wearing an old High School polo shirt, he threw away his rifle and fled the building along with panic-stricken students and escaped the school before police entered. He was caught while walking on the street.

Cruz, who was adopted along with his brother, had been a troubled child much of his life. His adoptive father died in 2004 and his mother, to whom he was very close, died in November of 2017. After this he made two suicide attempts with drugs and alcohol. His behavior became erratic after his father died, and he was sent for therapy. Although he showed signs of improvement, his rages continued. He started wearing military clothing, killing animals, and became obsessed with violent video-games on the internet and with guns. Frequently he would blow up in a rage if he lost a video game—once destroying the family TV set. He punched holes in walls. A neighbor found him hitting his head and covering his ears, as if tormented from within. Kids had been picking on him and bullying him. He complained of intense loneliness and lack of friends, and said he scared girls away.

It turns out that for years, Nikolas Cruz had been wrestling with a dark angel—but the angel was getting the upper hand. In a confession released by Broward County, he told detective John Curcio that he had long been hearing a voice in his head. The voice started around the time his father died and worsened after Cruz's mother died of pneumonia, just months before the rampage. "It's my bad side," Cruz told the detective. "It's my demon." The voice told him to cut himself, to kill himself, to hurt others, to buy guns, to "Burn! Kill! Destroy!" It also told him to buy the rifle he used in the massacre. Sometimes, Cruz would buy guns to protect himself from the voice and he kept the guns locked up to keep the voice from getting them. The voice in his head kept him from being lonely, he said—like a friend—“I just wanted to have somebody.”

Nikolas Cruz’s avenging angel wanted to kill his pain and the people who had caused it, just like the shot-gunner in my patient’s dream. It had tried twice to kill the pain by killing Cruz himself in two unsuccessful suicide attempts. Then, in his increasing alienation, loneliness, and isolation Nikolas Cruz began to fill up with rage. He got no help in his struggle with his demon. His parents were both gone and no-one seemed to

care. He started buying guns. He played violent video games obsessively. He had just been shunned by an old girlfriend and gotten into a fight over her. Finally Valentine's day arrived—the day of love....and death. Cruz heard the voice of his avenging angel again—louder this time. We don't know what it said.<sup>23</sup> And then there was nothing but the blood of children drenching the carpets and splattered on the walls.

As a nation, we were traumatized...again. An assault rifle in the hands of a troubled teenager shooting innocent kids at close range. It is too much to bear. It shatters us and makes us numb and it makes us angry and it makes us want to act instead of understand. Our fear and terror leads to primitive defenses. We turn things over to our angels and so we find ourselves thinking in the stereotypical patterns of the primitive archetypal mind. We become fundamentalists again—extremists. Nikolas Cruz, we say was insane—a mental case—a predator, possessed by evil. Give him the death penalty. Lock him up. And then (we imagine) we can put armed guards in our classrooms or arm our teachers themselves so we can kill someone like him before he kills others. That's what our President has suggested on several occasions, and the NRA loves it. Trump tweeted:

“So many signs that the Florida shooter was mentally disturbed, even expelled from school for bad and erratic behavior. Neighbors and classmates knew he was a big problem. Must always report such instances to authorities, again and again!”

And while Donald Trump showed some initial signs—right after the shooting at Parkland school—of being open to a few minor regulations on the sale of guns, he rapidly fell in line with the NRA's cynical mantra “guns don't kill people, people kill people.” Or as the NRA said after Newtown, “an armed society is a polite society. To stop a bad guy with a gun it takes a good guy with a gun!”

Readers of this essay will have no trouble identifying this response as a *dissociative response* to collective trauma. It is completely identified with the archetypal ‘powers’ of the defense system—the light and dark angels. Such a psychology holds itself “above the fray” of our broken world and our broken hearts. It will not let these feelings “in.” It splits the world into powerful good guys and weak or disturbed bad guys, vilifies or discounts the bad guys, keeps innocence over here on “our side” and resolves the complexity of a multi-faceted psychological and sociological issue with simplified, partisan answers and actions. It is conflict-avoidant and therefore phobic about democracy.

W.E.B. Du Bois<sup>24</sup> once said that “Back of the writhing, yelling, cruel-eyed demons who break, destroy, maim and lynch and burn at the stake, is a knot, large or small, of normal human beings, and these human beings at heart are desperately *afraid* of something.” He goes on to say that their fear is of many things, but mostly of being de-humanized, marginalized, degraded, disgraced and of losing their hopes and their futures. All these despairing realities had come true for Nikolas Cruz.

Behind the heinous acts of Cruz's avenging angel there was a human story. He was a young man in terrible conflict with ‘powers’ that he had no help in dealing with. Terrified,

alienated and friendless, he acted out and brought more rejection upon himself. He got thrown out of school. He was bullied, picked on, pushed around and beaten up. Soon he felt like he no longer belonged to the human community. So he retreated to his angels and found similar outraged angelic and demonic voices on the Internet to amplify his own. His human anger turned into archetypal rage, then possessed him. He identified with it. When he turned his demon loose it simply did what rage-demons do. It killed and killed and killed.

If we are to have any chance of understanding kids like Nikolas Cruz or shaping a collective response to traumas allegedly ‘caused’ by them, then we must struggle to understand the common ground of humanity that we share. This is difficult work, because their crimes are so monstrous—so heinous—that it is easy to cast them “out” instead of taking them “in.” We get some help in this struggle from C. G. Jung who often quoted the a maxim of the Roman playwright Terence; *Homosum; humani nil a me alienum puto*;<sup>25</sup> “I am a human; therefore I count nothing human alien to me.”

Applied to ourselves, this means—among other things-- that there’s a dark avenging angel in all of us—a heartless killer who wants to obliterate our awareness of feeling when feeling has become ‘too much.’ We need to remind ourselves that behind the mask of that killer there’s a story--a human story like ours--even if we're too angry or numb or traumatically dissociated these days to look into it. As citizens of a democracy, we must look into it because this is our work--finding the humanity in the ‘enemy,’ even if the enemy has been possessed by evil. We don't do this because we are bleeding heart liberals and want to re-habilitate everyone, but because we need to understand what human circumstances--what human weakness or misfortune--allowed this possession in the first place. We need to wrestle with our angels so that we can help them wrestle with theirs. We are all survivors of trauma and now people like Nikolas Cruz threaten to create in us the same raging anger, the same wretchedness, the same avenging angels that led to their crimes. We must be careful not to repeat the defensive pattern of killing consciousness by splitting their human stories off from ours. As citizens in the American experiment and "trust holders of democracy" we must make this effort to listen and to understand.

### **Final Thoughts On Democracy**

In the history of Depth Psychology, it is by now well known that the human personality exists in ‘parts’ and not originally as a ‘whole.’ The ego develops as a kind of volcanic archipelago of conscious islands slowly rising out of a “sea” of unconsciousness. These islands represent different experiences and are not always “compatible” with each other or with the ego-ideal or the aspiring ‘identity’ of a person. And so they exist initially as ‘part-selves’ or separate ‘self-states’ (Bromberg) in conflict with each other. In a safe and healthy ‘democratic’ inner environment, the separate part-selves get to know each other and even benefit from the struggle with their differences. Slowly, a dynamic and resilient ego develops and a wholeness that contains ‘more’ than just the sum of the parts, comes into being (*e-pluribus unum*). This wholeness contains a mystery and has been called various things in Psychoanalytic theory: “the transcendent function” (Jung), the

“analytic third” (Benjamin, Ogden), the “potential or paradoxical space” for open-hearted living (Winnicott).

By contrast, in a traumatic environment, some of the “islands” of experience are so painful or alien that they cannot be included in the whole, and fear of their inclusion floods the spaces between them. Dissociative defenses become necessary and ‘angels’ are called in to both ‘kill’ (dark angel) and ‘encapsulate’ (bright angel) those painful injuries and childhood memories that cannot afford to be consciously associated with the central ego, lest the personality be broken or annihilated. The ego identifies with these heroic angels and narcissistic survival is exchanged for real living from a core of selfhood that includes our woundedness and vulnerability. The heart is frozen and closed and has forgotten how to open. Life goes on but at the cost of intimacy and creative living. The result is a dissociative psychology and we have seen several of the monstrous and distorted forms this takes when it gets hold of our collective life.

Terry Tempest Williams once wrote that “*The human heart is the first home of democracy*” and I think she is right about this. She goes on to say that the heart is “the house of empathy for the pain of others.” It is “where the bravery lives...that allows us to stand in the center of uncertainty with strength.” It embodies a wisdom that “dares to be vulnerable in the presence of power.”<sup>26</sup>

All this is true, but in this essay I’ve been suggesting that, as the “first home of democracy,” the human heart is something more. It’s also an arena for a battle...a battle between conflicting emotions. It’s the place where we wrestle with our angels—all day and all night if necessary, like Jacob did—until they bless us. It’s the place where we struggle with our loves and our hates in order to transform them into something workable—into feelings we can use to deepen our relationships in communion with others.

Such an ‘Agon’--from the Greek ‘struggle or contest’--is what Jung appears to mean by the perennial and universal struggle to unite “the opposites” in the individuation process.

....when you say “Yes” you say at the same time “No.” This principle may seem a hard one, but as a matter of fact there must be this split in the libido or nothing works and we remain inert. Life is never so beautiful as when surrounded by death. Once I had a very wealthy patient who on coming to me said, “I don’t know what you’re going to do with me, but I hope you are going to give me something that isn’t grey.” And that is exactly what life would be if there were no opposites in it; therefore the pairs of opposites are not to be understood as mistakes but as the origin of life.<sup>27</sup>

The struggle with the opposites—to bring them together in a *coniunctio oppositorum*—is for Jung what gives life its dynamic vitality. It is also what makes life *meaningful* because consciousness is born from the experience of this struggle between opposites. And the creation of greater consciousness was for Jung the true ‘telos’ of a meaningful

life. “As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.”<sup>28</sup> It follows from this, as Edward Edinger says, that:

Experiences of inner and outer conflict which are resolved creatively and are accompanied by a sense of satisfaction and life enhancement are examples of the creation of consciousness.<sup>29</sup>

This only happens in a democracy of the psyche. Inner and outer democracies are always breaking down fundamentalistic, totalistic, and absolutist categories into relativistic, provisional, and contingent ones...always transmuting 440 volts into usable electricity—always generating conflict and then resolving it. Democracies, in this sense are to the collective polity what healthy families are for bringing up civilized, emotionally literate children. They are transformational containers. They are projection-eating machines. They take in evil, digest it, and give it back as hate and finally as civil disagreement. This struggle increases consciousness.

So in its struggle with the opposing ‘powers’ of a dissociative psychology democracy—both inner and outer- *is effectively an engine of consciousness-creation*. Democracy is a way of both opening the heart and increasing the “light” of consciousness.

For these reasons, Democracy, within and without, is precious and worth fighting for. As an engine of consciousness-creation it is unique among all the polities in the world in its ability to transform and humanize the ‘powers’ that menace us with their absolutism, their extremity, and their seductive simplifications. Nonetheless, like the psyche itself, democracies can be weakened by trauma and the defensives that grow up around it. The biggest threats to our democratic traditions at this time in America are the trauma-generated fears that foreclose honest conflict among the feelings and opinions that generate the energy that gives us light—like hydrogen burning at the center of a star. If this inner struggle between opposing factions dies out or is displaced by disputatious wrangling, so too does the light of democracy and the hope for greater consciousness and meaning that it offers the world. This is our challenge, because as we speak at this time in American history, the light is dimming. Because we speak--and because we *can* speak--the light brightens once again.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Singer and Samuel Kimbles (eds) (2004) *The Cultural Complex: Contemporary Jungian Perspectives on Psyche and Society*, Brunner/Routledge, New York.

<sup>2</sup> See “The Centrality of Dissent” by Natan Sharansky and Rachel Friedman, in *Fight for Liberty: Defending Democracy in the Age of Trump*, M. Lasswell (edtr), New York, Public Affairs, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Adorno: *The Authoritarian Personality*, 1950.

<sup>4</sup> Bollas, C., *Being a Character*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992. Chapter 9

<sup>5</sup> Philip M. Bromberg has written extensively about this struggle in the clinical situation. See especially *Awakening the Dreamer*, 2006, The Analytic Press, Mahwah, NJ. For example: “In a growth-facilitating treatment, there develops an increased ability to

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surrender the safety afforded by dissociation, and a simultaneous increase in the capacity to bear and process internal conflict.” (p. 69)

<sup>6</sup> Stewart, L. H. (1987) “A brief report: affect and archetype”, *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 32: 35-46.

<sup>7</sup> Bromberg, *Ibid.*,

<sup>8</sup> Blake’s image borrows from the Judeo-Christian tradition and portrays the opposing divine powers as ‘angels,’ one of whom (Lucifer) has “fallen” from Heaven. Other mythologies demonstrate the same tri-partite structure. For example, in ancient Egypt we find (1) a source of violent dis-membering energy threatening the cosmos (Seth) (2) a principle of goodness, harmony, and civilization which is constantly threatened by Seth (Osiris) and (3) a child born from Osiris (and his wife/sister Isis) who is part human and part divine. Ultimately it is the dual ‘child’ who establishes his kingdom on earth and defeats the dark forces of dissociation (Seth). The psychological meaning is the same in both mythologies.

<sup>9</sup> Grotstein, J., *Who’s the Dreamer who Dreams the Dream etc.* Complete quote

<sup>10</sup> This will involve us in allowing ourselves to “feel” them: Edinger’s suggestion of how to experience the opposites is to figure out what you love and hate. See *Mysterium Lectures*, p. 323.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Wink (get citation)

<sup>12</sup> David Brooks, *The Road To Character*, Random House, New York, 2015, p. 52ff

<sup>13</sup> Wordsworth, William, *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, Lines 88-93.

<sup>14</sup> Berean Study Bible

<sup>15</sup> William Butler Yeats: *The Second Coming*, (get reference)

<sup>16</sup> William Davies; *Nervous States: Democracy and the Decline of Reason*; W.W. Norton & Col. New York, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Kurt Anderson, *Fantasyland: How America Went Haywire*, Random House, New York, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> See Anderson, p. 358

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360

<sup>20</sup> As reported in Jon Meacham’s *The Soul of America: The Battle for our Better Angels*, New York, Random House, 2018, p. 74

<sup>21</sup> The interested reader can read that story in Donald E. Kalsched “Getting your own pain: a personal account of healing dissociation with help from the film *War Horse*,” in *The Routledge International Handbook of Jungian Film Studies*, Luke Hockley, editor, Routledge, London, 2018, pp. 303-314.

<sup>22</sup> Alice Miller: “For Your Own Good:” Miller says: “In the childhoods of the worst tyrants in history I discovered a recurring pattern: extreme cruelty, idealization of the parents, glorification of violence, denial of pain, and revenge wreaked on whole nations and peoples as a way of getting even for the cruelty they had once experienced and then denied” (preface of *The Truth Will Set You Free*).

<sup>23</sup> Details from: New York Times article “Nicolas Cruz, Florida Shooting Suspect, Showed Every Red Flag...” February 15, 2018

<sup>17</sup> (Terence, Heauton Timorumenos, l.1.25 quoted in Jung, Vol 18, par 91n.)

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<sup>24</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America*, 1935. Quoted from Jon Meacham, *The Soul of America*, p. 3., New York, Random House, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Terry Tempest Williams, “Engagement” *Orion*, July-Aug. 2004, <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/143/>.

<sup>27</sup> C. G. Jung: Notes on the Seminar Given in 1925, McGuire editor, p. 78.

<sup>28</sup> MDR, p. 326

<sup>29</sup> Edward F. Edinger, *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung’s Myth for Modern Man*, Inner City Books, 1984, p. 18.